

**2012 WASHINGTON GROVE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORTS
May 12, 2012**

PLANNING COMMISSION – Joe Clark

Membership – Steve Werts (liaison with the Town’s code enforcement officer), Samantha Beres (building permit reviews), Peter Nagrod (Building and fence permit review), Charlie Challstrom (Chair), Brenda Gumula (Alternate, fence permit review), and Joe Clark (Council Liaison). Eric Gleason retired from the Commission in June where he had served since March 2009. He provided a solid transition in leadership and was a gifted chairman. We appreciate Eric’s service to the Town and wish him the best in his new endeavors. Charlie Challstrom became the new chair of the Commission, providing both historical memory and professional expertise and has been enormously generous with his time. Together the members have provided a level of consistency, fairness and objectivity which gives the Town an equitable process.

In addition to permit review and approval, the Commission has worked with the Historical Preservation Commission in better coordinating the permitting process, allowing earlier assistance to residential modifications and additions which help the Town maintain its historic identity.

Building Permit Activities (last 12 months)

- 407 Acorn Lane – Fence approved
- 416 Center Street – Sun room approved
- 201 Cherry Ave – Addition to home approved
- 415 Grove Ave – Garage roof lowered as per Mayor’s request; height verified
- 127 Maple Ave – Relocation of fence to new boundary line approved
- 201 Maple Road – Conversion/enlargement of carport to garage disapproved
- 108 Ridge Road – Temporary Use Permit approved for shed
- 202 Ridge Road – Addition to home approved
- 204 Ridge Road – Fence approved
- 302 Ridge Road – Existing shed relocation approved
- 330 Ridge Road – Accessory building/observatory approved
- 342 Ridge Road – Fence approved
- 358 Ridge Road – Fence approved
- 510 Washington Grove Lane – Replacement of fence approved

Boundary Surveys – The Town contracts with Snider & Associates for boundary surveys and plats for filing in the Montgomery County Land Records and then available online from the Maryland State Archives. During the past 12 months, the Town boundary adjacent to the Humpback Bridge was surveyed and marked. The next Town area to be surveyed is Block 3, bounded by Center Street, Washington Grove Lane, and Chestnut Avenue. The boundary surveys improve our knowledge of public rights of way for maintenance and safety. Block 3 became a priority when the County recently announced plans for replacement of the asphalt path along Washington Grove Lane.

Towne Crest Redevelopment Proposal – Owners of the Towne Crest Apartments, in the County and adjacent to our West Woods and Town residences along Daylily Lane and Washington Grove Lane, have proposed redevelopment of the Towne Crest 8-acre property to more than four times the number of current rental apartments. There are existing problems needing attention, and the increased units and associated traffic will exacerbate negative impacts on Washington Grove. The Town’s Planning Commission convened a work session to evaluate the proposal and

compile recommendations for the Mayor and Town Council. The Planning Commission's evaluation, available on the Town's website, cites problems with meeting planned development criteria in the County Zoning Ordinance, community compatibility, tree preservation, vehicle and pedestrian safety, green space, and storm water runoff. Consultations with Towne Crest representatives and County Planning Staff continue as this rezoning and redevelopment proposal moves towards action over the summer by the County Planning Board and then the County Council.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL – Joe Clark

We continue to participate in the Maryland Municipal League, work with the Montgomery County Department of General Services on Casey 6 & 7, and work with the City of Gaithersburg and the Shady Grove Civic Alliance. We are engaged with Montgomery County officials and staff on each of the issues which affect our community.

The Town will host the Montgomery chapter of the Municipal league on May 17, 2012.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT—Sylvie Favret

As in years before, we are still fortunate to have had very few incidents this year. Thank you again to Keith Gillis for your thorough monitoring of the safety around town and to all the Block Captains.

LAKE COMMITTEE—Sylvie Favret

Hutch and the committee are keeping on top on every need and care pertaining to our Maple Lake. This year we discontinued the phone land line that was barely used since most everyone has a mobile phone these days. We have installed a new "Kiosk" inside the gate to display town rules. Hutch has contacted the new police officer in charge of communicating with the town, Officer Scott Zimmerman. This spring we have had a challenging algae situation requiring several interventions but Hutch is never defeated! Thank you all for your involvement.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE—Sylvie Favret

The Outdoor Lighting Advisory Committee was asked by the Mayor and Council to coordinate the resident requests during the street light conversion. Carolyn Rapkievian is chairing this committee and gathering numerous inputs and comments, while Charlie Challstrom has dedicated numerous hours of negotiation with PEPCO over the last two years on this constantly evolving project. The rapidly changing technology has offered a challenge to PEPCO which had a difficult time in adjusting the new bulb specifications to the Town's original bulb selection. Carolyn Rapkievian and Charlie Challstrom will make a presentation at the annual town meeting. I strongly encourage more residents to join the Lighting Committee to explore longer term options.

FORESTRY & BEAUTIFICATION – Audrey Maskery

Reforestation in the Town Parks: Thirteen new trees and ten shrubs were installed by Stadler Nursery under the supervision of the Forestry Committee during the past year plus two additional trees planted by Town Maintenance.

Tree Removals: Six trees have been removed so far at a cost of \$5,400 with additional work planned before the end of the fiscal year. Eight trees have been removed from Town property by Asplundh under a Pepco contract. This work was done at no cost and saved the Town a considerable amount of money. The trees removed were either dying or in poor health while

other trees that presented a danger to power lines were pruned. The Town also received nineteen vouchers valued at \$3,800 redeemable at Stadler Nurseries under the Pepco Vegetation Management Tree Replacement Program as a replacement for the trees lost from Town property. The \$3,800 will be used to purchase trees for re-forestation. Where possible, contractors were used to top some dead trees and Town Maintenance removed the bottom trunks. This action saved the Town some money as well.

Gypsy Moth Spraying: A Town survey conducted by MD Department of Agriculture last fall indicated no new egg masses. Based on this information no spraying will take place. The department will conduct their annual survey next fall.

Arbor Day: Maintenance assisted by rototilling around McCathran Hall and planting three late blooming red Azaleas donated by Mr. Terry Cox as well as other new azaleas. Arbor Day volunteers rallied around to plant 100 plugs of Vinca groundcover and assorted annual plants to brighten the path. Many thanks to all who helped make our Town Hall so beautiful!

MEMORIALS – Audrey Maskery

A plaque has been placed on one bench by Clapperton Courts in memory of long time resident of the Grove Mary Kay DuBois.

A plaque will be placed on a bench in Morgan Park by the Evans family in memory of former Mayor (1981-1983) Bob Evans.

The Colorado blue spruce on Maple Avenue was donated in memory of Mary Kay DuBois.

The Sweet Gum close to Oak Street was donated in memory of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Horan.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC) – Joli A. McCathran

Members: Bob Booher, Chair; Margot Bohan, Gail Littlefield, David Stopak, Mimi Styles

Archivist: The Town hired Pat Patula as the part-time Town Archivist. After her initial review of the collection, Pat reported the Town archive was in good shape. PastPerfect, archival software, was purchased for the entering historical data. The goal is to preserve historical materials as well as making the information available for public use. Town Resident Wendy Harris is spending many hours volunteering with Pat on organizing and scanning materials.

Amend/Expand Historic Washington Grove District: The HPC recommends Amending Historic District on the National Register Historic Places. Town Resident Wendy Harrison is spearheading this project. She is consulting with Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and the Maryland Historic Trust. The advisability of expanding the historic district in 3 parts/steps East and West Woods, houses, Washington Grove Meadow Conservation Park.

Permit Review Procedure: The HPC continues to work with the Planning Commission on possible changes in the building permit application process. The HPC would like to consult early to aid the homeowner in preserving the character defining elements of the Historic District prior to finalization of plans and submission of them to the Planning Commission.

Workshops: The HPC continues to sponsor workshop to offer resident the opportunity to learn about historic preservation of homes.

WASHINGTON GROVE MEADOW CONSERVATION PARK – Joli A. McCathran

The Town received an opinion from our attorney, Bill Roberts. He recommends the “LOS Field” to be officially referred to as the Washington Grove Meadow. He feels that Washington Grove

Meadow Conservation Park, the name used by Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) staff, is consistent with this.

Brenda Sandberg, Project Legacy Open Space, presented to the Committee the rough draft of the "Operation and Use" plans. She outlined the maintenance schedule, plantings, and the possible addition of a kiosk with maps and additional information about the trails. She proposed the clustering of trees in areas of the field and the thickening of the existing tree line. Her discussion of the plan with the Meadow Committee included:

- Plant double row of trees behind the Ridge Road hedgerow from the large opening northeast toward the grove of small Black Locusts.
- Plant double (or triple) row of trees, especially including plenty of evergreen specimens for screening, along the forest buffer against the future local park and the ICC interchange.

The Washington Grove Conservation Meadow Park was bush hogged and mowed by M-NCPPC maintenance in early spring. M-NCPPC had again contracted to remove non-native invasive plant material along Ridge Road and the tree buffer areas. Brenda Sandberg is working towards a fall tree planting.

Additionally, P&P archeologist visited the field to look at the rock "quarries" in the lower (towards Toll Bros) side of the field. The archeologist said, without further studies, that they could not tell if they were also used in pre-Columbian times. But they are on an historic register so they cannot be destroyed or the trees removed around the sites, allowing more buffering in the area.

PLAYGROUNDS – Joli A. McCathran

Town Maintenance Steve Werts installed safety barriers around the playground equipment and the parking areas by the athletic field, tennis courts, and playground areas. He also installed new fencing around the all-weather and clay tennis courts. Thank you for a job well done and the many volunteers who assisted Steve in these projects.

RECREATION COMMITTEE – Alice Negin

Missy Yachup/Eve Zibart – Co-Chairs

The Recreation Committee meets every three months in McCathran Hall. All are welcome.

The following is a list of activities that the Recreation Committee participates in either through direct conduct or enthusiastically support.

2011-2012

- Town Meeting Party
- June Music Weekend
- July 4th
Activities (Parade/Judging/Potluck
Picnic/Ball Game)
- Labor Day Festivities
- October Bluestober Fest
- Halloween Monster Ball
- December Holiday Show
- Caroling
- Ceili Dance
- Tennis Lessons
- Summer In The Parks
- Zumba Dance Class
- Film Society
- Mousetrap Concerts
- Yoga
- Teen Bad Movie Night
- Magic Show

McCATHRAN HALL NEEDS COMMITTEE – Alice Negin

Ann Briggs – Chair

The committee met in the fall of 2011 to review the condition of the whole building and to assess what work was in the adopted budget to be accomplished in this fiscal year, to review the general physical state of the building to see if additional needs had surfaced, and to consider what budget issues we might request for the FY13 budget in the spring of 2012.

During this year:

- Wood floors and stairs throughout the building were refinished by Hawkins Floors.
- Town Maintenance removed the large map case from the Council room, cleaned and repainted it and returned it to the Hall. A work crew consisting of Committee members, the Town Clerk and the Town Archivist sorted through and moved the contents of the case, and arranged the contents in a useful order.
- Town maintenance secured a commercial size floor buffer and began a regular waxing/buffing schedule of the Main Hall floor, which has greatly enhanced the appearance. Refinishing will be reviewed and rescheduled for FY14, as needed.
- All windows and screens in the building were cleaned by a commercial company.
- The pull cords of the wooden blinds in the Main Hall are being replaced by Town Maintenance to alleviate the breakage problems with the existing thinner cords.
- A new gas furnace was installed to serve the lower level replacing the original 16 year old furnace.
- Significant repairs were made to the sprinkler system by Guardian Fire Protection Services and sprinkler backflow rebuilding is scheduled for current fiscal year.
- Town Maintenance made repairs to the vacuum assist toilets and the kitchen sink drain line.
- Maintenance also reconstructed the drainage system from the furnace room, and the culvert at the corner of Center and Chestnut.
- Maintenance in conjunction with Forestry and Beautification redesigned the planting area along the Center Street side of the Hall to alleviate long-standing issues of erosion from roof run-off.
- Invasive ants threatened to take over the kitchen in the fall. The Town Clerk secured professional help from an exterminator who eliminated them in and directly outside the Hall and agreed to return for further work, if needed in the spring.
- Lids of the older plastic trashcan in the lower hall and the bathrooms were discarded, having become permanently discolored and scuffed from use.
- Town Maintenance repainted the entrance doors and the McCathran Hall wooden sign over the Hall front porch. They also reconstructed the stone pavers at their junction with the slate porch of the Council Room and the lower hallway entrance door to eliminate a dangerous lip that posed a real hazard for walkers in those areas.
- The Committee has noted the space issues related to the display of photos of former Town Mayors in the Main Hall. The Committee plans to recommend ways to correct this.
- Finding a good outdoor storage home for the traffic cones also need completion. Town Maintenance has been asked to design and build a moveable container that can be placed in the exterior nook near the exit door at the bottom of the Hall steps. With the crush of summer work, this project will occur next fall after leaf season and grass cutting is done.
- A deep cleaning of the Hall was postponed until FY14.

For the FY13 Budget, the following sums are requested for McCathran Hall Needs:

- Continued weekly janitorial services.....\$2570

- General Maintenance.....\$5000
(This will include painting interior and exterior window frames, furnace inspections, and additional track light fixtures).

WEBSITE – Alice Negin

Bill Saar - Webmaster

The Town continues to upgrade and update the Town website under the capable hands of Bill Saar. The Town Clerk also updates events and McCathran Hall use on the calendar.

Bill reviewed the Postman and the Google calendars. He reported the pros and cons of both calendars as follows:

Postman Calendar

- Pros: Multi color events offer better visual experience. It has good search capability to filter events/calendars.
- Cons: In the future, this calendar may cost money. There are no click event details/with pop-up.

Google Calendar

- Pros: It is free. Click view event is detailed with pop-up.
- Cons: A cluttered appearance in all views. No color coding for events in the monthly view. Weekly view may require scrolling up/down to see events on the home page frameset.

After review and with discussions, Kathy Lehman and Bill both like using the Postman Calendar. They recommend that we continue to use the Postman Calendar over Google. In the future if we need to pay to use the Postman Calendar, they will revisit the idea of using the Google Calendar.

MAINTENANCE– Bill Robertson

The major accomplishments during 2011 – 2012 have been many and most could not have been completed without the assistance of volunteers. Each time that the call went out for assistance, volunteers appeared. Thank you all!

McCathran Hall: The under floor insulation of the Assembly Hall was completed. This along with repairs to the heating duct system greatly improved the ability to heat the hall. Repairs to the stairway and drainage sump at the entrance to the Hall furnace room were a major step in preventing flooding of the furnace room. The landscaping surrounding the Hall was improved with the addition of new plantings and splash barriers. A new furnace was installed in the lower hall area after the original unit failed. All doors to the hall were sanded, primed and painted. The floor of the main hall and the council chambers were cleaned and refinished. A floor buffer was purchased which is allowing the cleaning crew to maintain the waxed floors.

Tennis fence replacement: The entire fence surrounding the three courts was removed and replaced with new black vinyl coated materials.

Maintenance Garage: The grounds continued to be cleared of trash and rubbish, more bamboo was removed and a bulk materials storage area was created utilizing the salvaged creosote poles from the Woodward park barrier replacement project.

Town Signs: Signs all around Town have been cleaned, repaired as needed, and repainted to give us many more years of serviceable life.

Town equipment: The mowers, leaf vacuums and tractor were repaired and serviced during the winter months. A used sand spreader was purchased and mounted on the town tractor. Due to the mild winter, it was only used once but will be a great cost saving piece of equipment in future years.

Woodward Park Barriers: The deteriorating barriers surrounding the parking areas of Woodward Park and the Tennis Courts were replaced.

Drainage: Ditches and swales were re-established at multiple sites around Town to keep runoff from the road surfaces. A concrete vault was constructed at the intersection of Chestnut and Center to eliminate the deep ditch formerly behind McCathran Hall. Drainage ditches in Morgan Park, Woodward Park and the East Woods were improved.

Maple Lake: Multiple sections of the lake fence were repaired or replaced; several dead or storm damaged trees were removed. An information kiosk was constructed and installed. The entrance to the lake was improved with the installation of identity fencing and a new outer gate was installed to replace the stolen gate.

Walkways: These areas continued to be widened where undergrowth had encroached into the walkways.

Playground Equipment: Multiple pieces of playground equipment were repaired and repainted. The barriers containing the cushioning mulch are being replaced as time and funds allow.

ROADS AND WALKWAYS – Bill Robertson

Tenniseal of Baltimore was contracted to seal cracks in our asphalt roadways. The sealant aids in preventing water infiltration into the road base and subsequent freeze-thaw heaving damage. No asphalt was replaced during the past fiscal year.

CONTRACTS – Bill Robertson

Contractual services provided by the Town include:

- **Trash**- This includes the weekly trash and recycling collection, two bulk materials pickups and weekly yard waste collection between March and November.
- **Leaf Collection**- Leaves are collected from the curbside between October and January and include a spring collection in late March.
- **Snow Removal**- Snow removal and road clearance is performed on a will call basis. No snow removal was required this year due to the record setting mild winter.

All contract vendors have performed well with only minor glitches which were rectified after notification of a problem.

The three year contract for trash and recycling expires at the end of the fiscal year. Requests for bids were extended to qualified bidders and the low bid was accepted by the Council in late March. Although our current contractor has provided excellent service, the cost savings by selecting the low bid was too great to ignore. Our new trash and recycling contractor will be Potomac Disposal.